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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR JUNE 02, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for June 02, 2005.

Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

ZAMAN / HURRIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: Lesker Acar, who was found guilty in 1998 of engaging in PKK activities in 1992, and was sentenced to life in prison, later appealed to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The ECHR ruled in June 2004 that Acar was not tried fairly and must be retried. Diyarbakir's 5th Heavy Penalty Court reportedly commenced a retrial in March 2005, but after holding two court sessions, it discontinued the case in the third session, citing a law which restricts action on ECHR retrial decisions period. (Ozgur Gundem reports the case was discontinued in order to avoid setting an example for the Ocalan case.)

RADIKAL / HURRIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM / EVRENSEL: A fourteen year old boy killed his 16 year old sister with a pistol in Silopi district of Sirkak in the name of honor after his sister allegedly had an extramarital relationship with an unspecified person. Some papers report that the girl was a victim of rape and she was in her sixth month of pregnancy.

RADIKAL: The representatives of NGOs concerned with women's rights gathered in a Diyarbakir park to make a press announcement regarding the new Penal Code. While the new code includes provisions that will benefit women, it does not satisfactorily address the honor killing issue, according to the NGO group.

RADIKAL: A report by two Mersin University professors includes a claim that the coal-powered power plant in the Afsin-Elbistan area is discharging particles comprising an ash and coal dust mixture into the atmosphere. This indicates that the plant is not operating properly and people reportedly face grave health risks, including lung cancer.

EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: Egitim-Sen (Education Union) members in Ankara, Izmir, Bursa, Tunceli, Siirt and Adana staged protests in front of AKP party buildings against the court ruling to shut down the Union (see press summary 05/26). The protesters chanted slogans saying, "Education in one's native language cannot be banned," "Shut down Incirlik Airbase instead of Egitim-Sen."

OZGUR GUNDEM: In an Ozgur Gundem report, a party called the Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK) claimed that on May 27, Iran launched a large military operation against PJAK members in the highlands between Piransehir of Iran and the Qandil Mountains. PJAK claims the operations were not successful and harmed only civilians.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The Suruc Subgovernor in Sanliurfa rejected the decision of the Suruc Municipality to name a new public park after a HADEP (People's Democracy Party) founding member, who was killed eleven years ago. To date the perpetrator of that killing has not been found.

HURRIYET / RADIKAL / OZGUR GUNDEM / EVRENSEL: The National Chairperson of the Human Rights Association (HRA), the Human Rights Chairperson of the Prime Minister's Office, the Diyarbakir Bar Association (DBA) and Diyarbakir branch of the HRA fired criticism at Turkey's intelligence service, MIT, and at the Diyarbakir Court that permitted MIT to monitor all communications in Turkey for two months. The DBA and Diyarbakir HRA demanded that the intelligence records from the two-month period be revealed and then destroyed.

CUMHURİYET / BOLGE / EKSPRES / OZGUR GUNDEM: Mersin's Journalists Association officials began a three-day hunger strike to protest the new Turkish Penal Code that went into effect as of June 1.

OZGUR GUNDEM: According to the paper, the terrorist organisation PKK/Kongra-Gel said in a press announcement that the PKK would declare a ceasefire should the state end its military operations and begin establishing dialogue with legal authorities or elected persons from among the Kurdish people.

CUMHURİYET: Turkey together with the IOM (International Organization on Migration) launched a campaign to fight against trafficking-in-persons in Turkey. This is project covers eastern Europe and countries from the former Soviet Union, as well.

EVRENSEL: The ECHR ruled that Turkey must pay 18,000 Euros in compensation to the Labor Party (EP) which was closed in 1996 allegedly because its charter prescribed "finding a democratic solution to the Kurdish issue for the benefit of people." The court also ordered compensations in ten other cases against Turkey, six of which were filed by families whose relatives were allegedly killed extrajudicially by security forces in southeastern Turkey.

EVRENSEL: Necati Eris was found dead in 2001 in Gulpinar district of Van. The family of Eris applied to the Van Human Rights Association as to date they have not been able to obtain an autopsy report from the Istanbul Forensic Medicine Authority and learn the cause of his death.

SABAH / HURRIYET: The Ministry of Defense paid 3,500 YTL (approximately 2,600 USD) to the family of a soldier that died in a conflict with PKK members in Lice district of Diyarbakir. In order to pay this, the Ministry filed a lawsuit for the same amount against the families of five PKK members in April 2005.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

1. SABAH (GUNEY) / EKSPRES / BOLGE: The heavy rainfall in two days in Ceyhan district of Adana damaged the wheat crop which would be harvested soon. This situation aggravated the hardships endured by producers who had been complaining about the low prices offered for their produce.

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